

THE LAST WORD

From our Local Committee under date of November 24.

I have delayed writing until Mr. Symon, Chairman of the Local Committee of the A. A. A. S., could give us some definite information. There are thirty-five different scientific societies meeting here during the Christmas week, and it has been very difficult for Mr. Symon to arrange all the dates until now. I have kept in touch with him and I believe I can now give you the final information concerning the joint meetings of the Wilson Ornithological Club and the Inland Bird Banding Association.

It was thought best not to have the meetings in the Assembly Room of the Kansas City Life Insurance Company, because the location is too far from the down town district. The Chamber of Commerce has assigned to us the Cabinet Room at the Hotel President for Monday morning and afternoon and Tuesday morning and afternoon, and the Congress Room in the same hotel for the Tuesday evening meeting. This hotel is only two blocks from the hotel headquarters.

The hotel headquarters were originally set for the Savoy Hotel, but have been changed to the Hotel Dixon on Twelfth and Baltimore, which is much closer to our meeting places. Members of the Club may write direct to the Dixon for room reservations. The prices range from \$1.50 to \$2.00 for single rooms and \$2.50 to \$3.00 for double rooms, without bath: with bath add a dollar to each of these figures.

I have made arrangements with a local photographer for a group picture either Monday or Tuesday noon, which will sell to the members at fifty cents a picture.

Mr. Symon informs me that facilities for motion pictures and slides will be at hand in these rooms.

I would suggest that the Club dinner be held on Monday evening at 6:30 instead of Tuesday, so as not to conflict with the Tuesday evening meetings.

I can arrange for a field day if it is desired, but I am of the opinion at this time that, since there are so many wonderful things to hear, few would care to miss anything by spending the time in the field.

Yours very truly,

DIX TEACHENOR, *Chairman,*
W. O. C. Local Committee.

[There is a conflict between this and previous announcements designating the hotel headquarters. We assume that the Local Committee is supreme in matters of local arrangements. This conflict will be adjusted promptly by correspondence, and any members who are uncertain may write to Mr. Dix Teachenor, Kansas City Life Insurance Company, Kansas City, Mo., for information.—Ed.]

 CONSERVATION

The Editor is inclined to open a new department in the WILSON BULLETIN under the heading above. If this is done it will be done on the theory that bird lovers and bird students and ornithologists, being interested in bird life, are also interested in the perpetuation of bird life: that they are concerned with the future of the bird life in America. If this is so, why shouldn't we discuss the problem among ourselves?

There are practically no people nowadays who do not accept the proposition that the wild life must be saved to the future. We may assume that there is unanimity on this subject. The division comes when we begin to consider the methods of salvation. Here we find wide variance of opinion on the efficacy of such methods as the bag limit on game birds, the shorter open season versus the closed season, the game refuge as a panacea, etc. These questions, and others, are very vital in the solution of the problem of wild life conservation in our country. Who shall decide? Who shall be heard? There has been no period in the history of our country when the interest in its wild life is more widespread than it is today. There has been no time when the issues have been as clear-cut as they are at the present. There has never been a time when views were more conflicting on the subject of the proper method of wild life conservation than at the present time. If too much time is not consumed in deliberation we may expect good results in the interest of the wild life. We must beware of the individual who is speaking for his own interests, rather than for the speechless animal, even though he may be quite sincere.

On this subject we find a remarkably forceful article by William C. Gregg, in the *Outlook* for September 16, 1925. We wish that every friend of bird life in America would hunt up this article and read it. It gives a side-light on the general situation with which we should all be acquainted. We do not need to close our eyes to other side-lights in apprehending this one.

We have just received Department Circular 360, of the U. S. Department of Agriculture. This pamphlet is a "Directory of Officials and Organizations Concerned with the Protection of Birds and Game: 1925." It gives a very long list of federal, state, Canadian officials who are charged with the duties of wild life protection. It also lists a great many of the federal, state, and Canadian organizations, with their officers, which make wild life protection a major or minor concern. If figures could be obtained it would be a matter of interest to many to know the total membership in each of these organizations. It is somewhat surprising, and very gratifying, to find so many organizations engaged in the work of conservation of our wild life. This Circular may be obtained from the Department of Agriculture as long as the supply lasts.

A summary of the "Game Laws for the Season 1925-26" is also at hand, being issued as Farmers' Bulletin 1466, of the U. S. Department of Agriculture. It presents the information usually contained in this bulletin. The one feature of this bulletin which stands out and obtrudes itself is the order permitting the killing of Bobolinks, issued May 7, 1925. The nature of this order may be best shown by quoting as follows from page 43 of the bulletin in question:

. . . "that until further notice persons may kill by shooting, bobolinks, commonly known as reedbirds or rice birds, from half an hour before sunrise to sunset, from September 1 to October 31, inclusive, in the States of Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Maryland and the District of Columbia, and from August 16 to November 15, inclusive, in the States of Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida, but the birds so killed shall not be sold, offered for sale, or shipped for purposes of sale, or be wantonly wasted or destroyed, but they may be used for food purposes by the persons killing them, and they may be transported to hospitals and charitable institutions for use as food."

This is, apparently, the same order that has been in force since January 17, 1919, except that one day is added to the open season, and New Jersey is eliminated. It seems preposterous in the first place that the Department of Agriculture would use its power under the Migratory Bird Law to make the Bobolink a game bird. In the second place it passes comprehension that the same authorities should encourage the destruction of Bobolinks by allowing them to be used for food.

Under this system a person may go out and shoot a batch of Bobolinks for the table, and claim exemption under the pretense of assisting agriculture. However, from the fact that the open season applies to certain northern states, we conclude that the Department of Agriculture wishes to encourage the destruction of Bobolinks. We are doubtful about the growth of rice in these northern states, but possibly these agricultural states raise other grains which the Bobolinks may feed upon.

If the Bobolinks cause serious damage to the rice fields in the south would it not have been sufficient to allow the owners of these fields to reduce the birds upon their own premises, and to prohibit the use of the birds for food? The ostensible purpose of this regulation is to prevent the damage which is done by the birds, and not to provide a new food supply. It looks, however, as though the net result is the latter. It is possible that the insertion of the clause permitting the killers to use the birds for food was the result of an effort at superlative efficiency. We think, however, that it is wrong in principle, as the young debater says. We once read a book on the care of ornamental trees, by a New Jersey authority, in which he condemned the common practice of allowing men to trim, prune, and cut out trees for the wood as compensation for the labor. This principle of compensation encourages the woodman to remove trees which should not be removed. Perhaps the analogy with the Bobolink regulation is clear enough.

We have always been strongly in favor of the Game Refuge Bill. But now in view of this Bobolink regulation we wonder whether it is wise and safe to repose in the federal government any more power over the wild life than it now has. We have heretofore believed in the efficiency of centralized authority; now we are wondering about it.—T. C. S.

A CONSERVATIONIST'S CREED AS TO WILD LIFE ADMINISTRATION

[Dr. Joseph Grinnell, of California, presents in *Science*, November 13, 1925, the following splendid summary of the principles of wild life conservation, under the above heading. We believe that our readers will generally agree that this epitome deserves wide dissemination, in which the BULLETIN is glad to do its part.—Ed.]

(1) I BELIEVE that the fullest use should be made of our country's wild life resources from the standpoint of human benefit—for beauty, education, scientific study, recreation, for sport, for food, for fur, etc. *All* these possible uses should be considered in the administration of wild life, not any one of them exclusively of the others. At the same time, any one use may be of more importance than the others in a given locality, so that such locality may be administered with that particular value most prominently in view.

(2) I believe that that portion of our wild animal life known as "game" belongs no more to the sportsman than to other classes of people who do not

pursue it with shotgun and rifle. More and more the notebook, the field glass and the camera are being employed in the pursuit of game as well as other animals. The newer generation by hundreds of thousands is turning to nature-out-of-doors, for recreation, instruction and pleasure through such agencies as the national parks, summer camps, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and Camp Fire Girls. Indeed, these other claimants upon our "game" resources are probably reaching to numbers greater than those of active sportsmen; *their* rights certainly deserve at least equal consideration.

(3) I believe it is unwise to attempt the absolute extermination of any native vertebrate species whatsoever. At the same time, it is perfectly proper to reduce or destroy any species in a given neighborhood where sound investigation shows it to be positively hurtful to the majority of interests. For example, coyotes, many rodents, jays, crows, magpies, house wrens, the screech owl and certain hawks may best be put under the ban locally.

(4) I believe it is wrong to permit the general public to shoot crows or any other presumably injurious animals during the breeding season of our desirable species. It is dangerous to invite broadcast shooting of any so-called vermin during the regular closed season, when the successful reproduction of our valuable species is of primary importance and is easily interfered with.

(5) I believe in the collecting of specimens of birds and vertebrates generally for educational and scientific purposes. The collector has no less right to kill non-game birds and mammals, in such places where he can do so consistently with other interests, than the sportsman has the right to kill "game" species. A bird killed, but preserved as a study specimen, is of service far longer than the bird that is shot just for sport or for food.

(6) I believe that it is wrong and even dangerous to introduce (that is, turn loose in the wild) alien species of either game or non-game birds and mammals. There is sound reason for believing that such introduction, if "successful," jeopardizes the continued existence of the native species of our fauna, with which competition is bound to occur.

(7) I believe that the very best known way to "conserve" animal life, in the interests of sportsman, scientist and nature-lover, alike, is to preserve conditions as nearly as possible favorable to our own native species. This can be done by the establishment and maintenance of numerous wild-life refuges, not only as comprised in private and public parks, but in national forests and elsewhere.

(8) In the interests of game and wild life conservation generally, I believe in the wisdom of doing away with grazing by domestic stock, more especially sheep, on the greater part of our national forest territory. A further, and vital, interest bound up in this factor is the conservation of water.

(9) I believe that the administration of our game and wild life resources should be kept as far as possible out of politics. The appertaining problems are essentially biological ones and are fraught with many technical considerations not appreciated or understood by the average politician or sportsman. The resources in question should be handled as a national asset, administered with the advice of scientifically trained experts.

JOSEPH GRINNELL.